

# Riverfront Heritage Trail

## Spirit of Kansas City Regional Scenic Byway



**Summary:** The Riverfront Heritage Trail is a bi-state nine-mile-long ribbon of green spaces, pedestrian and bicycle paths, historical markers, and dramatic public artworks designed to link and enhance bi-state Kansas City's historic, cultural and recreational treasures, beginning at the riverfront where Kansas City was born.

The Spirit of Kansas City Regional Scenic Byway will interweave an auto route with the Riverfront Heritage Trail. Trailheads will make it easy for the driver to stop, park, and then cycle or walk the Heritage Trail system.

**Total Investment:** \$22 million (\$16.3 million secured to-date)

**Economic Benefit:** Unknown

**Proposed Timetable:** All trail segments to be completed by July 2004

**Funding Sources:** Port Authority; MoDOT; KDOT; Missouri Dev't. Finance Board; Army Corps of Engineers; City of Kansas City, MO; Unified Government of Wyandotte County / KCK; Missouri Dept. of Economic Development; U.S. EPA; Missouri Community Service Commission; Kansas City Star Fndtn.; William T. Kemper Fndtn.; Kansas City Terminal Railway Co.; U.S. Nat'l. Parks Service; Missouri Lewis & Clark Commission; Greater Kansas City Community Fndtn. - KC 150; Faultless Starch/Bon Ami Co.; Kansas City Southern Industries; additional state, federal, and private donations (yet to be secured).

**Public Funding Source Options:** See above.

**Ballot Issue Requirement:** N/A

# **Riverfront Heritage Trail & Spirit of Kansas City Regional Scenic Byway**

## ***Timeline***

2003 Mar.	Mayoral Task Force Report completed, submitted
2003 Spring	Trail Rangers program commences
2003	Receive results of application for National Scenic Byway status and funding
2003	All segments of trail under design or construction (with possible exception of segment 4F – River Market/West Bottoms Connector)
2003	Secure funding for Segment 4F
2003	Begin implementation of recommendations from Mayoral Task Force
2003	Continue transition of management of trail and scenic byway project from City to Kansas City River Trails, Inc.
2003	Continue fundraising for operations and maintenance, public art
2004 July	All segments of trail completed (with possible exception of segment 4F – River Market/West Bottoms Connector)
2004	Continue fundraising for management of trail, public art, remaining improvements to be made



## KANSAS CITY BROWNFIELDS SHOWCASE COMMUNITY RIVERFRONT HERITAGE TRAIL

The Riverfront Heritage Trail (Trail) is a system of bicycle and pedestrian paths, coordinated with bus transit service and new downtown urban housing, designed to provide alternatives to automobile transportation, and to provide scenic and recreational amenities which will connect residential, employment, commercial and retail activity centers and destinations along the bi-state Kansas City urban riverfront. The riverfront area has sat idle for many years, but now due to renewed interest in redeveloping “brownfields” properties in the urban core, both Cities have been working together to promote economic development and public improvements in the area. The Trail is a centerpiece of this Brownfields redevelopment strategy. It will provide visitors with access to the Kansas and Missouri Rivers, to an urban archeological park located in the original Town of Kansas river settlement, to commercial, retail and residential centers throughout the urban waterfront, and to a restored natural area in Riverfront West to observe and learn about wetlands and river ecology.



### Phase I Riverfront Heritage Trail Routes

This large-scale project is a first of its kind in the Kansas City Area and when completed, will cover over 9 linear miles. The project will link the downtown business districts of both Kansas Cities, the Rivermarket and Richard L. Berkley Riverfront Park, the Central Industrial District, and the Westside, Quality Hill, and Strawberry Hill neighborhoods. The Trail will create a self-sufficient alternative transportation system for the urban riverfront area. The project will serve an employee base of over 150,000 and residential population of over 60,000. It will reduce high-polluting short car trips among these areas and result in a measurable contribution to regional air quality.

Construction of Trail segment 1 is complete in Richard L. Berkley Riverfront Park (see below). Grants totaling \$6.1M have been obtained from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Transportation Enhancement (TE) Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) programs. These grants, together with another \$2.1M in state funding and over \$5M in local match funding, will pay for the design and construction of most of the initial phase of the Heritage Trail system. The Town of Kansas pedestrian/bicycle bridge, which spans the Town of Kansas (Kansas City’s original settlement) and links the River Market with the riverfront, was opened to the public in August 2002.



Segment 1 - Richard L. Berkley Riverfront Park

The detailed design of the Trail is being conducted by a team of consultants under contract to the Port Authority of Kansas City, and the Cities of Kansas City, Kansas and Missouri. Key oversight has been provided by a stakeholder steering committee of representatives of local governments, federal agencies, non-profits, community groups and private companies. In addition, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation entitled “Kansas City River Trails Inc.” has been formed to promote fund raising from private corporations and foundations, and partner with the Cities in the operation and maintenance of the Trail system, once completed.



## THE SPIRIT OF KANSAS CITY REGIONAL SCENIC BYWAY And the RIVERFRONT HERITAGE TRAIL

The National Scenic Byways Program encourages people to seek out and communicate all of the special qualities of a place: archeological, natural, cultural, historic, recreational, and scenic. This makes driving a road, which may be rural, suburban, or urban, not only a visual experience but also an educational, physical, and emotional experience.

The philosophy of the Byways Program is that “the byways will be conceived by, shaped, and managed to serve the community or communities through which they pass.” Therefore, communities may utilize the byway to enhance the economic, cultural, recreational, and educational opportunities of Kansas City (Kansas and Missouri) and visitors through designation, protection, interpretation, development, and promotion of outstanding travel routes.



**Spirit of Kansas City Regional Scenic Byway and Riverfront Heritage Trail Routes**

Benefits of Byway Designation include but are not limited to: the value of recognition, which calls attention to intrinsic qualities and outstanding character; increased community recognition; promotion of tourism as an economic development strategy; and promotion of a greater quality of life.

Using several key trailheads, the Spirit of Kansas City Regional Scenic Byway will interweave an auto route with the Kansas City Riverfront Heritage Trail bicycle, pedestrian, and greenspace system. These trailheads will make it easy for the driver to stop, park, and enter the Heritage Trail system on bicycle or on foot. Both projects will promote cultural tourism by linking the downtown business districts of both Kansas Cities, the River Market and Richard L. Berkley Riverfront Park, the Central Industrial District, and the Westside, Quality Hill, and Strawberry Hill neighborhoods.

Partnerships that are designed to provide cultural tourism, economic development, educational, and recreational, benefits, are essential to the success of this program. Thus, a Scenic Byway Corridor Management Committee is currently being formed to facilitate the role of these partners and to meet the requirements of the Designation application. This is where we need your support! We are seeking your involvement in this committee to make this designation another successful venture for the Kansas Cities of tomorrow.

*For more information, please contact:*

*Laurie Brown, Conservation Ecologist  
Patti Banks Associates  
The Uptown Theatre Building  
3700 Broadway, Suite 301  
Kansas City, MO 64111  
(816) 756-5690 / fax (816)756-1606  
e-mail:lbrown@pbassociates.com*

